5. Settlements and Boats

361 The Caribs have only a very small clearing at the place where they live, which is a place for the carbet and some smaller houses around it. This is planned so that the Europeans will not be able to know about them or capture them by surprise. It is for the same reason that the greater part of them are established on the windward side of the island, because here the waves are rough and terrain is high and it is difficult to gain access to it. Nevertheless, they are always near rivers because they would not be able to forego water either for drinking or for bathing. [279] There is a yard between the carbet and the other houses. Each one cleans the area of it in front of his own house. After supper they gather and talk around the fire, which they make if the evening is cool, until they say to each other "let us go in and sleep." On the next day they do not complain about the evening dew and they have not caught colds. [85] They [364] take away fishbones, peels, and their refuse from the tables, and throw them far away, because such things breed chiggers. [303]

344 "We have to wrap cassava in thick leaves in the middle of the carbet." The carbet is the room, market place, work shop, storage place, dining hall, and dormitory, and the community house of the Caribs. It is almost like an oval cradle. Its height [sic] is sixty feet and its width is twenty feet. It is built plainly, but with all the care and utility one might imagine. The entrances are toward the center of the house, and are four diametrically opposed holes. These entrance holes are only four feet high. There are no other doors or windows, and there are no pegs or nails. There is only one storey and no chambers. There are no divisions nor hindrances inside the carbet which would impede 12 people walking side by side in a row. At the height of 7 feet there are beams 10 feet long to hang 100 to 120 cotton [513] hammocks, where the Caribs rest peacefully in perfect harmony without quarrels or noise. Women rarely enter this house except to serve the men. [476]

342 The Caribs have thatched houses (mânna) built a little like those of our peasants except that the roof is made of the upper part of reeds or of palmetto leaves which extend to the ground. They are oval in shape and lack windows entirely. In place of a door there is only a